

May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

We embrace all spiritual journeys and encourage service as we build a more loving and just world



September 2025
Volume 88
Issue 9



WELCOME BACK!

Beloveds, I hope you were able to spend time this summer with those you love. I hope you were able to feel the sun on your skin. I hope you were able to enjoy the laughter of children, and the joy of feeling the sand or grass beneath your feet. I hope you found time for rest. I hope you found time to eat ice cream and drink lemonade. I hope you made time for unexpected grief, and profound moments of hope.

In June, I traveled to the UUA General Assembly in Baltimore and got to hug so many wonderful beloveds. We visited with my aunt in North Carolina and spent time with our niblings and in laws in Branson, Missouri. I helped a good friend settle into their new apartment and decorate their new church office in Philadelphia. I also helped my best friend Lauren (pictured with me) move into her new home; now we are neighbors! I painted a LOT of things in our home a bathroom refresh, painted our front door (a beautiful blue color!), and a few other things that needed a fresh look. I spent quality time with my husband, Isaac, and I spent time reading and sleeping in my hammock on our deck and then there were the countless hours laughing. I am proud that at the National USA Power Lifting Federation Bench Press competition in Philly, I successfully lifted 182lbs!



Rev. Jo and friend Lauren at USA Power Lifting Federation Bench Press Nationals 7.26.25

This summer I also spent time developing adult religious education classes for you, as well as took an online preaching course to grow my skills. I've been diving into a better plan for all things membership and welcoming at MMUUS. All summer I've been looking forward to returning and continuing our important work.

I saw a video on social media a few months ago where someone said "Wake up each morning and find a reason for it to be the best day of your life." I decided to try it out! "What were the things that gave me joy?", you ask? The sunset from my deck, chats on the deck with my bestie, the huge toad that lives in our garden retaining wall, sitting in our Florida room working at my computer with all the windows open enjoying the weather and sounds of nature, the exuberant, never-ending joy of our 15 month old puppy, Denali, snuggling up with my sweet, soft, smelly hound dog Eleanor. Making personal records at power lifting events. Remembering that I love my job and all the incredible people with whom I get to be in beloved relationship.

My loves I know, I KNOW there are many unthinkable things happening in our world, which is why it is important to always look for the joy everywhere, and find a reason for each day to be the best day of your life. So, this year at May Memorial, we are going to lean hard into welcome, belonging and joy. We are also going to talk about hard things and keep working for justice. We lean into belonging and welcome so that this is always a place to be safe, loved, cherished. I love you each so much and I am excited to see where this year takes us together!

~Rev. Jo

		
9/7	Water Communion: A Feast For All	Rev. Jo VonRue and Director of Religious Education Stacy Sceiford
9/14	Safe Harbor: Finding Hope and Home When Everything Feels Broken	Rev. Jo VonRue and Worship Associate David Mendelsohn
9/21	Rosh Hoshanah: The Awe of Us	Rev. Jo VonRue and Worship Associate Tosca Bruno-van Vijfeijken
9/28	You Belong Here: The Revolutionary Message That Started It All	Rev. Jo VonRue and Worship Associate Ruth Yanai

<https://zoom.us/j/95274927371?pwd=H5pJFsXMxCMCfJIOWupV326HUrh1Fo.1>



Meeting ID: 952 7492 7371

Passcode: 210281

One tap mobile

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+16469313860,,95274927371# US



"Water Communion: A Feast for All"

Please join us at May Memorial for our annual Water Ceremony which will take place on Sunday September 7th at 10:30am. Please bring with you some sacred water from a place that you love, as well as a non-perishable food donation (see page 3 for suggested donations) to share as part of our service.



Welcome to another awesome year of Religious Education at May Memorial!

One of the most incredible things about May Memorial is our congregation's dedication to Religious Education; it shows by how many active families we have in our community! And the only way for this ministry to succeed is with a large volunteer force (we need at least 20 Guides aka teachers, plus additional volunteers). And this is the time of year when I send out the ask, "Would you like to volunteer in RE?"

Well, I am currently in the midst of that flurry of emails where I am inviting folks to be RE Guides and then finding the best fit for all of those volunteers. The majority of the RE Guides at May are parents of children who are actively participating in the program, but that doesn't mean that you need to have kids in the program to be a part of the ministry that we do in RE! Kids and youth benefit greatly from having a variety of supportive adults in their lives; just spending time getting to know the kids in your class can make a big impact on their self-esteem.

Being an RE Guide is a commitment of approximately 10 Sundays in either Fall (Sept-Jan) or Spring (Jan-June). Guides work in teams of two, which means that you won't be expected to lead a class alone, and Guides are also supported by me, the DRE. I provide all the supplies and lesson plans that you need to make class happen and am happy to support you if any questions or concerns arise. So if you've ever had an inkling that it would do your soul some good to spend time leading and learning with some of our little legends, tweens, or teens and you haven't received one of my emails, please reach out to dre@mmuus.org and let me know that you would like to learn more about being an RE Guide.

This year we are offering three elementary level classes: Soul Matters (K-2nd grade), and Wonder Box (3rd-4th grade) are both curricula that follow the monthly worship themes that we explore during worship, and Jedi Academy (5th-6th grade) is a Star Wars based curriculum that involves lightsabers! We are also offering "Becoming" a Coming of Age curriculum for 7th and 8th grade youth. And I am excited to say that for the first time since the pandemic, we are facilitating Teenz for senior high youth!

In addition to RE classes, there are lots of opportunities to get involved with multigenerational events too! I'm looking forward to another fantastic year of learning and growing in community together—because community, especially community rooted in our UU values, is so important for the times we are living in.

In Faith,

Stacy Sceiford, Director of Religious Education (DRE)



September 7th Ingathering and Food Offering

We will be collecting food for our partners at Gethsemane United Methodist

The following items are very much in need at the Gethsemane Pantry:

- White Rice (2 lb bags)
- Dried beans (especially lentils)
- Small bottles of cooking oil (32 oz)
- Tomato sauce
- Pasta sauce
- Spaghetti pasta
- Salt & pepper

We do not need:

- peanut butter
- cans of beans
- soups, etc
- packaged macaroni and cheese



HISTORY CORNER



The Flaming Chalice



As we know, the flaming chalice is a primary symbol of Unitarian-Universalism. Its use began in World War II when the image of a flame within a chalice was designed for the Unitarian Service Committee by Austrian artist Hans Deutsch, who was working with that organization in Europe. Eventually the chalice design came to signify the American Unitarian Association. When the Unitarian and Universalist organizations merged in 1961, the symbols for the two denominations were combined into an off-center chalice enclosed within two overlapping circles.

Some UU churches began to incorporate the ritual of lighting a chalice into their services in the early 1980s. May Memorial's use of a chalice in worship is more recent. When the congregation moved to our present building in 1964, volunteers signed up to decorate the "sacred shelf" each week. The decorations often included candles and flowers, and sometimes other special objects. On "intergenerational Sundays," when children were upstairs with the adults, a large "community candle" was lit. It was molded from many candles that had been burned at individual family celebrations and collected for this purpose.

For a number of years, the "singing bowl" that is now rung just before the start of worship at May Memorial, was used as a chalice. That is, it held a wick that was lit on Sunday mornings. At the 2019 annual meeting, after a short report on the history of the flaming chalice in UU-ism, the congregation approved the search for an actual chalice. The singing bowl, a familiar and much-loved object from another tradition, would be used for meditation, but not to hold a flame.

As chalices vary greatly, a task force was formed to choose a chalice that would be suitable for May Memorial. In January of 2020, their selection was presented at a congregational meeting. In part due to its cost and competing priorities, such as the parking lot project, the congregation did not approve the recommended chalice. To gather input, the task force held two town meetings early in 2020, but in mid-March, the Covid-19 pandemic hit, moving all church activities online. The Board decided to put off the selection of a chalice until the congregation could again meet in person.

During the shutdown, long-time member and church leader Peter Colman took the initiative to design and fabricate a chalice, using readily available materials, and offered it as an example. Five years later, we continue to use and appreciate the chalice that Peter Colman created for us, shown in the accompanying picture.

Mary Louise Edwards & Kent Lindstrom

MMUUS History Committee, history@mmuus.org

It's time for our annual **Mum Sale** again folks ! You might recall all those beautiful mums we bought and sold last September? And we made over \$1,000 in profit for our church! Let's all work together to hit \$2,000 this year....are you in?!

Rememberwe should all buy some for ourselves....and sell to others! If you don't want/need flowers, consider buying some to decorate the outside of our church or to give to folks in nursing homes! These will be hardy mums (perennials) in 9" pots.

Colors: Red, Yellow, Purple & Orange

Cost: 1 for \$13; 2 for \$25 ; 3 for \$36; 4 for \$46

You can start taking orders now, then submit your order to Julie Daniel or Teri by **Wednesday, September 17th.**

You can pick up the flowers on Tuesday, September 23rd from 10am - 5pm.

Questions? Contact:

Julie Daniel & Kevin King

jdanielyoga@gmail.com; call or text: 315-729-8179





All are invited to our first after-worship lunch of the church year, immediately following the service on **September 7th**. Sponsored by the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee, the lunch will feature a variety of soups, salads, casseroles and desserts. Donations for the lunch are on a sliding scale, starting at \$0. We could use some additional help with jobs and food contributions. If you are so inclined, just use this link to sign up:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E74IKHM7NhpuoqfFTajtIUyKb4I_iTIconVWtqlxmvM/edit

save the date

Who - All of our MMUUS family and friends

What - Delicious spaghetti dinner
Spectacular Raffle Baskets

Where - MMUUS Social Hall

When - Saturday, October 25 5-7 PM



New Choir Season Begins



Our first choir rehearsal of the new church year will be Thursday night, September 4th, at 7:30 in the Sanctuary. Welcome returning members, and those that have a desire to join our mighty singing group. Contact me to see what the skill set is, and if this is something for you! My email is gkimeorganist@gmail.com, or feel free to give me a call at (315) 729-3734.

~Glenn Kime

Get ready for some fall fun! You're invited to our **Pumpkin Carving Potluck Party** — a festive gathering for all ages filled with food, creativity, and community.

When: Saturday, October 18th

Time: 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Where: May Memorial Social Hall
3800 E. Genesee St, Syracuse, NY 13214

We'll have:



Pumpkin carving for all skill levels (bring your creativity!)



A community potluck – bring a dish to share (*not required)



Drinks & hot cocoa provided to keep you cozy

Come for the pumpkins, stay for the food and fellowship!
Whether you're bringing a casserole, cookies, or just yourself.

RSVPs are appreciated, but not required.

Be on the lookout for a sign up to let us know if you plan to come and/or what dish you'd like to bring!

We would love to see you there!

Contact: Leah Cronlund (leahcronlund@gmail.com)





*Community,
Conversations,
Connections
with Rev. Jo*

Democracy in Action: Building Community Power & Resilience

The times call for more than hope, they call for skills. Join Rev. Jo VonRue, and Rev Douglas Taylor as well as UUs from multiple cities for this powerful 6-part monthly series, on 2nd Tuesdays starting October 14th, 6:30-8pm via Zoom.

Learn: Strategic Action Design • Making Sense of Our Moment • Bridge Building Across Difference • Mutual Aid Essentials • Interrupting Violence & Building Peace • Scenario Planning Workshop

Whether you're a seasoned activist or just getting started, these workshops will equip you with practical tools for the challenges ahead. Our communities need people prepared to act with wisdom, courage, and love. Please contact office@mmuus.org to register.

Join us in building the future we need.



*Fresh Faces,
Coffee and
Connection
with Rev. Jo*

Join us for Fresh Faces, Coffee and Connection every fourth Sunday directly after worship at 11:45am starting in October in the Memorial Room! This monthly gathering welcomes newcomers to MMUUS with coffee, snacks, and friendly conversation. It's a perfect opportunity to learn more about our community, meet our minister and fellow congregants, and ask questions in a relaxed setting. You are welcome exactly as you are, we're excited to get to know you better!

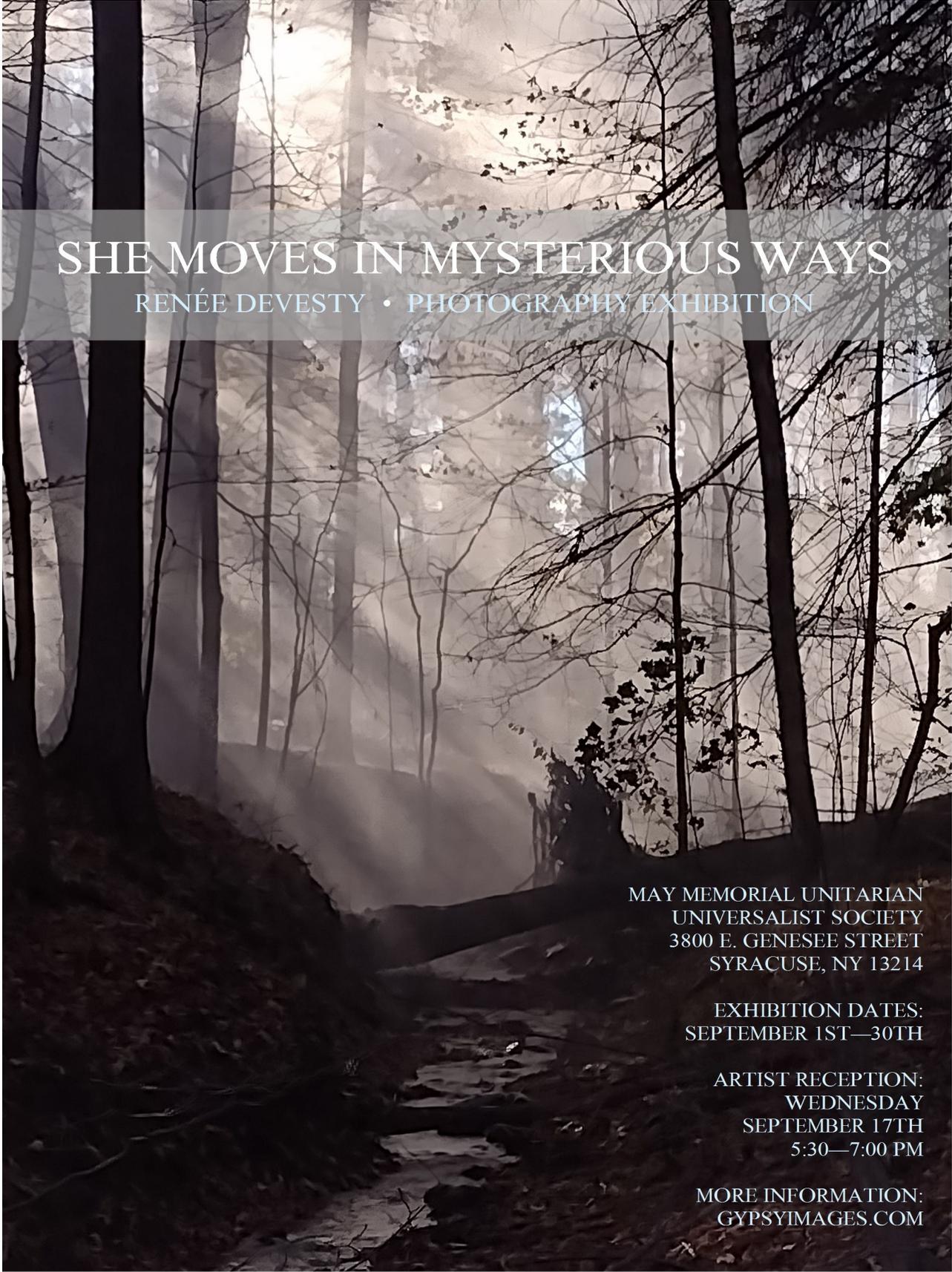


Soul Matters
SHARING CIRCLE

Join us for Soul Matters , a meaningful monthly gathering where we explore life's deepest themes together. From Building Belonging in September to Flourishing Together in June, each month offers a chance to dive into conversations that nourish the spirit and strengthen community bonds.

Whether you're seeking connection, curious about new perspectives, or simply want to engage in thoughtful dialogue, you'll find a welcoming space here. Led by Rev Jo, all are invited to join us on second Sundays at 12:15 in the Teenz room for these enriching discussions that complement our monthly worship themes. There's a small amount of optional prep work available for those interested; you must contact Teri in the office at office@mmuus.org to get the monthly packet.

Come as you are, because here at May Memorial, every soul matters



SHE MOVES IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS
RENÉE DEVESTY • PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

MAY MEMORIAL UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY
3800 E. GENESEE STREET
SYRACUSE, NY 13214

EXHIBITION DATES:
SEPTEMBER 1ST—30TH

ARTIST RECEPTION:
WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 17TH
5:30—7:00 PM

MORE INFORMATION:
GYPSYIMAGES.COM



Unirondack, is a camp and conference center (Unirondack.org) in the Stillwater Reservoir area outside Lowville, NY where we have enjoyed this community building weekend for close to 20 years. There are comfortable accommodations, community meals, lake boating and swimming opportunities and hiking around the western Adirondacks. This is a multi-generational weekend, where folks get to know one another better through singing around the campfire, playing games, doing art, chatting about important and not-so-important topics and having fun together! If you prefer time alone in nature, that is an option too, since there are quiet spaces to read a book, journal or contemplate life. If it is a rainy weekend, we have many indoor options, put on the soup and hot water, and snuggle up in the indoor spaces. This is our community weekend, everyone is encouraged to participate in at least some activities and expected to help with one meal preparation/setup-cleanup.

The costs for the weekend are: \$110/PP for those over 12 years old; Children 4-12 years \$100; Children 3 and under are free. This includes 5 meals, use of the Unirondack facilities and support from their staff. People sometimes carpool up to camp, which is about a 2.5 drive from the Syracuse area. We often have room for friends; check with me if you want to bring someone. Dietary needs are accommodated.

Payment by:

Check: (made out to: "Stephanie Cross") hand-delivered or mailed to: 3844 Pompey Center Rd, Manlius, NY 13104)

Venmo: Stephanie-Cross-75; last 4 digits of phone 0372

PayPal: StephanieCrissCross

Cash in person; I will be at MM for Sunday worship in September

Some scholarship money is available for MM folks; ask about it!

Please complete this Google document to register: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeFiZMwLYjnV-alnJlzb5ECtODou91FVjzOuFDeB2J1lvJ2A/viewform?usp=sf_link

Questions? Contact Stephanie Cross mscross1234@gmail.com or 315-430-0372

The logo for the Westcott Street Cultural Fair features the words "WESTCOTT STREET" in a colorful, multi-colored font (blue, green, yellow, purple) above the words "CULTURAL FAIR" in a teal and purple font.

Sunday September 28th at noon

This year May Memorial was able to procure a booth at the wonderful annual event, the Westcott Street Cultural Fair.

YAY!

Just for a little perspective, last year there were 40 booth places available and 158 applications.

This year there are even more! So we were fortunate to actually 'get one' this year.

We will need help in the booth. I have created an online signup site where you can go and add your name. There are several half hour segments, but please consider signing up for more than one spot.

[BOOTH SIGN-UP](#)

So please put ***SEPTEMBER 28*** on your calendar.

The parade is at noon and entertainment starts at 12:30.

If you have any questions, please contact Judy Jerome (judy_jerome@hotmail.com) for details.

May Memorial is letting the Westcott Nation know that WE ALL BELONG TOGETHER.

Each year they celebrate their diversity with the Westcott Street Cultural Fair which this year will be held on Sunday, September 28th.

I'm Judy Antoine, in charge of organizing the Parade and last year we had over 30 groups march down Westcott Street.

This year one of those groups will be MMUUS, thanks to Judy Jerome and Bess Kamerance who got us a booth and will be getting the Parade organized.

Please JOIN US as we let the world know that LOVE IS THE ANSWER.

[Sign Up to be in the parade](#)



Save the Date!



New York State Convention of Universalists
2025 Annual Meeting

Two Centuries of Love at the Center

October 24 & 25, 2025
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton, NY



- *Keynote address by UUA President Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt*
- *Bicentennial celebrations*
- *Workshops on stewardship, resistance, and more*
- *Tours, talks, hikes, music, and fellowship*

Join us as we joyfully celebrate the Bicentennials of NYSCU and the UU Church of Canton!



*Housing at Holiday Inn Express, Canton, NY.
Local hospitality options available www.uucantonny.org*

Registration and details coming August 2025 at nyscu.org

UPCOMING Events

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tuesday	9/2	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	9/4	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Monday	9/8	Twisted Sisters	7pm	Teenz
Tuesday	9/9	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	9/11	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Tuesday	9/16	Writers Group	10am	Teenz
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	9/18	BookEnders	1:30pm	Memorial Room
		Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Tuesday	9/23	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
Thursday	9/25	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall
		Depression Support Group	4:30pm	Memorial Room
		Choir Rehearsal	7:30pm	Sanctuary
Tuesday	9/30	Tai Chi	3pm	Social Hall



Minister

Director of Religious Education

Director of Music

Board President

Book Keeper

Finance

Church Office

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Stacy Sceiford

Glenn Kime

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May Memorial Unitarian Universalist Society

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Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs: 9am-2pm (other times by appointment only)

Days off are Friday and Saturday

Contact us:

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315-446-8920